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## THE CHAIRMAN'S ADDRESS

DELIVERED ON WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 28, IN ST. LOUIS,  
MO., AT THE SIXTEENTH ANNUAL MEETING OF THE  
CENTRAL DIVISION

BY LAURENCE FOSSLER

CAN THE STANDARD OF EFFICIENCY OF MODERN LAN-  
GUAGE TEACHING IN THE SECONDARY SCHOOLS  
BE RAISED?

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I have no apologies to make for choosing this theme for the address this evening. The place and importance which modern language study has assumed in our modern educational systems, both collegiate and secondary, fully justify this choice. We do well to consider from time to time the vital problems connected with our work, with modern language teaching, be those languages English, French, German, or any other form of living speech. We need to examine at close range, in clear and definite terms, the aims and purpose of our efforts, the means and instrumentalities through which these are sought to be reached, the causes of our successes and our failures, and the nature and character of practicable measures for betterment and improvement.

For we are well aware that, though the modern languages have fallen heir to a large share of the domain once occupied by the classic tongues, they are, nevertheless, on trial before the bar of enlightened public opinion and judgment. We are conscious that their worth and value must be tested and proven by the results, both 'practical' and 'cultural,' attained in their study. They must demonstrate their fitness and serviceability in train-

ing the mind to habits of close application, accurate observation, clear thinking, and refined feeling. To demand less would imply faithlessness to educational ideals. Nothing less can justify the expenditure of time and effort necessarily given even to a partial mastery of a foreign tongue. For even after satisfying, to the best of our ability, the demands of a so-called practical, utilitarian, or vocational nature—the needs of the traveler, the business correspondent, the scientist, or the investigator—we are still confronted by that vast army of young men and women to whom language study can be nothing if it be not mental and moral discipline, if it be not a “means of grace” for clarifying thought and judgment, for purifying tastes, and quickening sympathies, for widening the circle of human interests through the medium of another people’s mode of speech. Language study is fruitless and barren if the learner cannot by its means be brought into closer touch than would otherwise be possible with the genius and character, the institutions and habits of life, the traditions, history, and literature of the foreign people.

These propositions are self-evident. They state the educational goal of the *Neuphilologe*; they are the ideal program which he has set before him. He knows full well the length and arduousness of the road that leads to its realization; he is aware that “Heaven is not gained by a single bound.” In less poetic terms: even a fairly respectable approach to these ideals requires long and well-directed, persistent effort on the part of both teacher and taught. Nor can we demand that our secondary schools shall attain them alone and unaided. Indeed, in our sober and reflective moments, we are forced to admit that even college and university instruction, alone or building upon the foundation laid in the secondary school,

only too often fails to attain the best results which the language study should yield.

We all realize certain inherent difficulties and obstacles connected with such study, whether undertaken in school or in college. A study entered upon at the age of 14 or 18 (as is done by many college students), that should be begun at the age of 11 or 12, cannot possibly yield thoroughly satisfactory results. What can be accomplished by a college instructor, be he ever so painstaking and conscientious, with a class of young men and women 18 to 20 years of age, almost every one of whom is unable to see any direct, practical application of the study in which he or she is engaged? Or what substantial, genuine and valuable results can be looked for when that study is directed—as it is very often in the secondary schools,—by teachers insufficiently trained?

I ask these questions not in a captious or faultfinding spirit. I understand thoroughly the complexity of the whole educational problem. I know that the responsibility for the unsatisfactory condition of the situation cannot be attributed to any one cause, or to any one part of our educational machinery. We are all fellow-sinners, all sharers and participants—and sufferers—in the fragmentary, unsatisfactory results accomplished. Nor is the situation, in the West, materially different from that in the East.

But a general confession of sins, a blanket act of contrition, is apt to soothe the conscience without purifying the soul. Individual shortcomings tend to be merged in the general whole. The New England Primer's "In Adam's fall we sinnèd all" is apt to make one resigned to the frailties of human nature. For, if the worst comes to the worst, one can take refuge in the thought that one's self, at least, is in a state of grace, and that the doc-

trine of total depravity really holds good only in the case of "the other fellow." Seriously, the tendency among college and university men is to refuse to take their share of the responsibility in the unsatisfactory state of secondary instruction, and to lay the entire blame upon others than themselves. Frequently, too, we imagine that secondary school men are not aware of the defects of their share in the educational output, and that they are not bestirring themselves to remedy these defects. Neither one of these attitudes is justifiable. In the final analysis the responsibility for the character of teaching in secondary schools lies largely with us, and the authorities in these schools *do* endeavor, as best they can, to measure up to sound educational standards.

If this is true—and there is no doubt it is—it certainly behooves us to examine carefully what, if anything, can be done by us, what ought to be done by us, to raise and increase the efficiency of modern language instruction in the schools. In answer to a note of inquiry respecting the status of such instruction sent to a large number of superintendents and principals of the Middle West, one of them, evidently a well-trained, vigorous, and clear-headed teacher, one thoroughly devoted to his high calling, replies:

"I am glad someone is 'getting busy' on the subject of German in the secondary schools. Having myself lived in Germany, I have been exasperated beyond expression by the utter futility of most of the German instruction in our high schools and colleges. After four years' work in high schools and numerous courses in the university, I find in general the students are quite unable to converse with me in common every-day German, about the simplest topics. College heads of departments come to our schools and test our classes for knowledge of lists of prepositions

governing certain cases, and go away clapping their hands because the teacher has succeeded in this stupidly memoriter foundation for the study of technical German grammar.

“Unless at least a rude facility is acquired in the study of German in our schools and colleges, the subject should be ruthlessly cast out by those who are trying to guard the precious opportunities of youth, that they may result in realities, and not in misty visions.

“You are perfectly at liberty to quote me, if you so desire.”

This is vigorous to say the least. But it is more: it is very largely true. The correspondent, a principal in one of the best schools of the country, voices the conviction of many of his craft, earnest, devoted, practical secondary school men, to whom the great mass of the youth of the land look for sane and sound training. Protests, such as the one he enters, should not be passed by unheeded. They should set us to thinking and acting.

As a pendant to this indictment I may cite the reply of one of our colleagues, who, in reply to the question: “What, in your judgment, can and ought to be done to improve the quality of modern language teaching in our secondary school?” unburdens his heart as follows:

“Goodness knows, a lot ought to be done, tho’ I fear but little can be done—for lack of any centralized authority that has any right to do anything. Every school board, superintendent, and principal insists on his right to appoint the teachers within his bailiwick and would resent any invasion of his right. Severe things *ought* to be done. 1) Have more teachers and smaller classes. 2) Have *very much better* teachers than we now have, better scholars, better pedagogues, bigger, finer, more magnetic and effective personalities—men and women *who*

*have it in them* and who *train* themselves for this career as for a *life* work and not merely to fill up a gap of uncertainty as to life-plans. 3) More pay and more recognition of every sort for such teachers—so that the best heads and hearts may be tempted to choose the profession. In short we've got to *quit* letting the contract (for the teaching of our children) to the lowest bidder, as we now do. 4) Better opportunities for our really able, earnest young teachers to fit themselves for their work. These confounded 'Normal' schools ought to be done away with or else turned into real Teachers' colleges, where men who know how can teach others how.

"But forgive me,—your last question touches a sore spot and the sparks fly in spite of me."

Another fellow-worker answers the question thus:

"*Thoroughness, accuracy* of knowledge, whatever method be followed. The knowledge of the average freshman entering the University is hazy, unreliable, and especially so his knowledge of the elements of grammar. We should insist upon more drill in *applied* grammar. If the present requirements are too high, they should be reduced, but accuracy in the essentials of the language should be strenuously demanded. The average teacher tries too many things, with the result that the vital values are neglected. The knowledge of German of the average freshman is too vague to be relied upon; hence the essentials have to be carefully revived in the University, if any scholarly results are to be attained. Equally vague is the knowledge of the essentials of German history and geography. With the proper use of our elementary textbooks this knowledge should be easily acquired. It seems to me that the average high school teacher of to-day, bewildered by the variety of ideals presented before him, fails to develop in the student any definite knowledge

of the language. Pronunciation is almost universally faulty. The knowledge of the most elementary vocabulary is meager. The works read are unwisely selected. In my judgment it is imperative that the elementary courses in the high school should be more carefully organized under the supervision or direction of some competent authority."

Much more of similar import, coming from sources East and West, could readily be adduced to emphasize the urgent need for reform and betterment in language teaching. Evidently the negro quack's "We cures de disease, sah, or we eradicates de system," would seem to be the only alternatives presented.

The practice, all but universal in a large section of our country, of admitting graduates from accredited high schools to Freshmen standing in college or university, makes the problem we are considering peculiarly our own. We cannot, must not, leave the secondary schools to work it out unaided and alone. The solution, if solution there be, rests very largely with us and with the institutions we represent. Ex-President Eliot was right when he declared that "Schools follow universities and will be what universities make them." This is necessarily so. The higher institutions alone have adequate means for training leaders in the educational field; they alone have the facility to develop a competent body of teachers. In availing themselves of these means and facilities they practically set educational standards.

Furthermore, say what we please, the men and women in charge of secondary school-work have shown and are showing a most commendable readiness to coöperate with the authorities in the higher schools to bring about better conditions. The unanimity with which the secondary schools accepted the Report of the Committee on College



Entrance Requirements,<sup>1</sup> not only as the basis of the relation between high school and college, but also as determining the character and quality of the work to be done in the schools generally, proves this assertion. To-day the requirements there set for college entrance<sup>2</sup> have been accepted by the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, by the New England Association of Colleges and Preparatory Schools, by the North Central Association of Colleges and Secondary Schools, and by similar organizations throughout the country. Whatever variations do exist are insignificant in comparison with the points of agreement. Nor do such variations, meeting local conditions or demands, or adjusting requirements to the widened educational experience of the one or the other of these standardizing bodies, or of schools, impair the essential uniformity of the system in operation.

It can, accordingly, no longer be said, as it could be said years ago, that the great obstacle to effective teaching was the lack of uniformity in the curricula of the high schools. In a way these standardizing agencies largely take the place of the *Lehrpläne* or *Cours d'Enseignement* of the European ministries of education.

Hence we must look elsewhere for the defects and shortcomings of our secondary teaching. They are, we are aware, partly irremediable, being part and parcel of conditions and circumstances beyond anyone's control, and partly remediable, if proper means are taken to effect a cure. The vast extent of our territory, local pride—shall I call it?—at any rate, the American unwillingness

<sup>1</sup> Made in 1899 to the N. E. A.

<sup>2</sup> In 1910 the College Entrance Examination Board examined 3731 students in 168 places in all parts of the country.

to concentrate more advanced educational efforts in fewer localities, the more or less shifting teaching *personnel* educating itself professionally only too often at the expense and to the detriment of the children in its charge, a public that has not yet learned to know and value expert, professional service and efficiency,—a public, at least, unwilling to pay for such service and efficiency,—all these and many other obstacles to educational progress loom up large and forbidding.

Then, again, the specific line of study we represent is by this same public regarded as a luxury rather than a necessity. What with the undeniable and inevitable press of the so-called practical, vocational, or utilitarian branches clamoring for recognition and a place in school curricula, and the consequent uncertainty of educational values, relative and absolute, it is small wonder that such is the case. Even some high educational authorities have called the necessity of language training into question. In an address, not long ago, President Schurman declared

“That the modern languages were originally introduced partly on the ground of their practical utility as media of intercourse with other nations, but mainly as available substitutes for the literary and linguistic discipline furnished by the ancient classics. There has been a great change in our conception of liberal culture since the fight was first made for the introduction of modern languages into the college curriculum. Latin and Greek were then regarded as essential conditions of a liberal education. We must as a matter of fact recognize that Greek is practically gone as a college subject, and that Latin, even though holding its own to-day, occupies no such preëminent position as it did. If French and German and other modern languages are to be retained, not for their own sake, what are the grounds and reasons for maintaining them? The obvious answer of the practical man is that they are useful for persons who desire to read French, German, or Spanish books or to converse with Frenchmen, Germans, or Spaniards. There are, however, so many good books written in the English language that the most omnivorous reader could probably satisfy his literary

cravings if he knew no language but his own. And if you exclude our college and university teachers and scholars, probably not one person in 500 who learn modern languages ever uses them afterward in conversation or could use them even if it were necessary. The teachers and the scholars gain their mastery of foreign languages by studying in foreign countries, and the small circle of persons outside these who will ever need to speak foreign languages might be advised to follow the same course."

Undoubtedly this is true and, from one point of view, reason enough for relegating the study of foreign languages, ancient and modern, to "innocuous desuetude." Equally telling arguments in defense of linguistic training can, no doubt, be made, though this is not the occasion to do so. We must admit, however, that there are many and will be an ever increasing number of educators who sympathize with President Schurman's views, if, eventually, it should prove impossible to make a better showing in the matter of foreign language study and teaching, if it should be found impracticable to reorganize and differentiate the secondary school curricula so as to permit the taking up of those languages at an earlier stage—say, in the present seventh grade. Could that be done—and it is done to a considerable extent already and with excellent success—there is little doubt that a great step in advance would be taken. In my judgment this Association may well exert itself to urge and press the desirability or, rather, necessity of the reform suggested. For the present, however, I do not wish to discuss this phase of the problem. I merely wish to point out the fact that even well-recognized leaders in education are driven to a critical attitude in the premises.

Mention was made a moment since of the well-nigh insurmountable obstacle of our unwillingness to focus secondary instruction in fewer centres. Germany with

her 65,000,000 population has only some 1125 preparatory schools of all sorts,—*Gymnasien, Realgymnasien, Oberrealschulen*,—while America, according to the Education Report of 1909, has 9317 public schools and 1212 private schools of supposedly equal rank, making a grand total of 10,529<sup>1</sup> institutions engaged in secondary education, or more than nine times as many as Germany supports.

To aid us in forming a still clearer idea of our scattered educational plant—more particularly as affecting our own specific field—the following representative figures may serve:

NUMBER OF SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN NORTH CENTRAL STATES  
TEACHING :<sup>2</sup>—

	GERMAN					FRENCH				
	One Year	Two Years	Three Years	Four Years	Total	One Year	Two Years	Three Years	Four Years	Total
Ohio.....	6	120	29	60 <sup>4</sup>	215	...	..	...	...	?
Ind .....	...	...	(estimated)		160	...	3	1	4	8
Ill.....	18	126	48	36	228	3	14	10	16	43
Mich.....	...	150	25	25	200	...	17	4	4	25
Wis .....	...	173	21	13	207	...	8	4	...	12
Minn.....	...	(of all grades)			185	...	...	...	...	?
Nebr.. ....	30	61	5	3	99	...	...	3	...	3
Mo .....	...	92	25	3	120	...	10	5	1	16
Kans .....	...	...	(estimated)		116	...	...	...	...	?
N. Dak.....	54	34	3	...	91	2	1	...	...	3
S. Dak.....	...	...	...	...	?	...	...	(of all grades)		6
Iowa <sup>3</sup> .....	21	118	13	11	163	...	...	...	...	?

This table, it will be perceived, presents some secondary schools in our territory alone as giving instruction in

<sup>1</sup> Cf. p. 1124 of said Report.

<sup>2</sup> It has been found impossible to obtain complete and detailed statistics in all cases.

<sup>3</sup> Data four years old.

<sup>4</sup> This comprises both the "accredited" and the "recognized" high schools: cf. *The Ohio Teacher* for November, 1910, p. 132.

German,<sup>1</sup> as teaching French or other Romance tongues. The task of providing teachers who shall be even fairly adequately trained is manifestly an erroneous one.

The department of high school inspection of the University of Nebraska lately undertook, at my request, an inquiry as to the status of German teaching in schools "accredited" by the North Central Association of Colleges and Secondary Schools. From replies to a *questionnaire* sent to these schools—330 responding—the following instructive data were gathered:

Number of Teachers of German (in said 330 schools),	566
Number of First Year Students, - - - - -	15,275
Number of Second Year Students, - - - - -	9,778
Number of Third Year Students, - - - - -	3,730
Number of Fourth Year Students, - - - - -	1,349

Or, assuming that the remainder of the (approximately) 800 secondary schools holding membership in the Association showed the same proportions, the grand totals would appear to be:

Number of Teachers of German (in entire North Central territory), - - - - -	1,370
Number of First Year Students, - - - - -	37,030
Number of Second Year Students, - - - - -	11,583
Number of Third Year Students, - - - - -	8,982
Number of Fourth Year Students, - - - - -	3,573
Total number of pupils studying German, - -	61,186

Undoubtedly these figures are somewhat too high for the class of schools considered, since among those replying to the *questionnaire* were those of Chicago, Cleveland, St. Louis, Milwaukee, Detroit, and other larger centres.

<sup>1</sup> 1377 exclusive of Illinois, South Dakota and North Dakota. No statistics were available.

Yet, considering that only the strongest and best schools can gain standing in the Association and that German is taught in a very large number of schools not thus recognized, the *actual* and *real* totals of both teachers and students of German would be greatly increased.

These figures cannot fail to bring home to us the weight of the burden which the secondary schools have undertaken to carry, and the magnitude of the task which they are attempting to perform. As has already been said, they make us realize the immensity of the undertaking to provide adequately trained teachers for them.

Turning for a moment to the matter of teachers' preparation for that work, the *questionnaire* above referred to yielded the following data:

Teachers of German (in the 330 schools replying),	- -	566
College and university graduates,	- - - - -	431
Normal school graduates,	- - - - -	69
Preparation not stated,	- - - - -	66
Have taken collegiate "teachers' course,"	- - - - -	275
Speak German as native tongue,	- - - - -	185
Residence study or abroad, or both,	- - - - -	195
Average time spent in studying college German,	- -	3½ yrs.
Average experience in teaching German,	- - -	3 yrs.

These data again, are, no doubt, somewhat too favorable for the entire North Central section, for the reason already assigned, *viz.*, that the smaller schools were, on the whole, not so prompt in reporting their status as the larger ones. Still, some facts stand out prominently enough. First: there is a gratifying percentage (76%+) of college graduates engaged in the work. Again, a large number reporting speak German "von Haus aus," while still more have enjoyed residence or study abroad. Approximately one-half of the teachers of German have availed themselves of special collegiate teachers' courses. The time

given to preparation—an average of  $31\frac{1}{2}$  years above a two-year high school course—certainly proves the willingness of teachers of German to qualify for their calling. There is no escaping that conclusion. Our individual experience, unsupported by statistics, likewise leaves us to conclude that the young people whom we send to the secondary schools are ready to avail themselves of every opportunity we offer them to fit themselves fairly for their work.

If this is a fair statement, if it comports with facts, I can reach no other conclusion than that we, their mentors, advisers and teachers, must bear a large share of the blame visited—and often justly—upon secondary school work. We make the teachers, we determine their qualifications, both theoretical and practical. The methods and ideals they pursue, the views and estimates of essentials which they seek to apply, yes, often the very tools which they employ in their work, are those we exemplified and used in training them. Nay, more. School officers—boards, superintendents, and principals, are, as a rule, ready and willing to accept our judgment regarding teachers' qualifications; they certainly welcome any helpful suggestion as to courses to be given, possible methods of improvements, text-books to be used, etc. The teachers themselves are conscientiously endeavoring to discharge their duties to the best of their ability.

Hence it would seem that we, the teachers and trainers of teachers, are not entitled to too free an exercise of fault-finding and criticism, no matter who else is entitled to that time-honored prerogative.

If, now, we turn for a moment to an examination of the collegiate courses required of the *angehenden Lehramtskandidaten*, we find, naturally enough, considerable variation both in theory and practice, in character and amount

of work insisted on. *E. g.*, in German 38<sup>1</sup> and 22 semestral hours of collegiate studies—*i. e.*, those above a two-year secondary school course—seem to mark the maxima and minima respectively. The general practice is to demand from 25-30 hours; *i. e.*, from one fifth to one-fourth of the entire collegiate course. Cultural subjects predominate largely. Literature, the study of its development, the historical development of the language (frequently including Middle High German), a more or less intensive study of special periods and authors, the classics, the moderns, naturally furnish the *pièce de résistance* of the course. To these more specifically cultural subjects are added more or less intensive and extended courses in conversational exercises and composition,<sup>2</sup> likewise—though only sporadically—*Vorträge und Sprechübungen* dealing with the German customs, culture, history, and geography,<sup>3</sup> and finally, special teachers' courses, varying from two to five semestral hours, and dealing with the pedagogical side of the teacher's training.

As I have already said, the insistence upon the cultural element in these collegiate courses is perfectly natural and, perhaps, necessary. It is natural because the average college teacher finds cultural studies more engaging, more congenial, more interesting, than the humbler, more formal disciplines. No doubt we are right in stressing, in the students' preparation, studies that will develop scholarly habits of thought, that will acquaint him with the spiritual treasures of the people whose language he studies, that will furnish him the ability to appreciate, scientifically, the course of evolution in literature and

<sup>1</sup> University of Wisconsin.

<sup>2</sup> The University of Illinois requires three courses in composition.

<sup>3</sup> Indiana University.



language. The teachers in our secondary schools should have a broad outlook upon their chosen field. Their course of study should clear the vision and open wide vistas to the best their line of work affords.

Nevertheless it must not be forgotten that the specific work which they are called upon to do differs very widely from that which we insist on so strenuously in their preparation. Here, it seems to me, lies the vulnerable point in our present method of procedure. If our students are to teach effectively, acceptably, professionally, we must recognize the problems they have to solve and prepare them to do so. Whether this involves, necessarily, a lessening of cultural requirements, I leave you to judge. Perhaps the scriptural injunction, "This ye should do, and not leave the other undone," applies in the premises. Certainly the prosecution, and even the successful prosecution, of mere cultural branches is not a guarantee of successful teaching. Specific means to insure their success need to be provided, if possible.

Of course, we are all aware that, say, the German system of requiring a *Probejahr* or *Probejahre* as supplementary to an extensive and intensive theoretical and cultural preparation is the ideal procedure, is ideally the correct and effective panacea for educational ills. Especially so, if the candidate has had the opportunity of spending some time in the foreign country whose language he is to teach. Then again the principle, and its strict enforcement by educational authorities, of definitely limiting and circumscribing the grade or class of work teachers may be called upon to do, of strict civil service rules, governing the advancement in the profession, and of careful and searching inspection by competent authority, inevitably make for thoroughness and professional effectiveness. But most, if not all, of these guarantees of success are

denied us, denied us by the very logic and nature of our situation. All the college and university professors in the land cannot change certain determining economic conditions. That is a truism apparent to all.

However, admitting these facts is by no means equivalent to confessing our inability to do *something* towards improving the situation, if we resolutely apply ourselves to do so. It is in our power and means to give the would-be teachers fairly adequate professional training and thus to enhance their capacity for better work. Nor is it lowering our standards of collegiate instruction nor demeaning sound educational ideals to give this training. Preparing teachers should no longer be a "side-issue," even if they are, largely, daughters of Eve. If we would better the nature and character of the work done in the secondary schools, if we would make our own earlier college years more effective, we must not deem it beneath our dignity to be and become teachers of teachers.

What now may actually be done in the premises? It was in furtherance of finding a sound answer, a practicable solution to this problem, that I took the liberty of addressing a note of inquiry to many of you some weeks ago. Needless to say that your kind answers have given me much food for thought; needless, also, to add that, in much that I have said and shall say I give you back your own.

Taking the cultural side of our young people's college courses for granted—as I think we may—we come to examine some of the practicable ways and means to increase their professional training. It is largely a matter of aiding them in transforming a *kennen* into a *können*, their static powers into a dynamic force. To this end we should do well to impress the young teachers with the worth, the dignity, and importance of their call-

ing, we should show and demonstrate to them the justice and rightfulness of the classics of modern languages as instruments of scholarly discipline and elements of culture, not merely as of more or less utilitarian convenience in business or the practice of a profession. As the Committee of Ten put it: "The educational effects of modern language study will be of immense benefit to all who are able to pursue it under competent guidance."

Again, we can put them in possession of the best and most rational educational thought of to-day. Methods old and new, reactionary and advanced, may be discussed and illustrated. The aims and objects of the reform movement in language teaching should be clearly apprehended by the students. No doubt, this will give them a "divine discontent" with the results their first tentative efforts entail. Furthermore, we can differentiate our courses more than we do to meet the practical necessities of our students. As one of my correspondents stated it:—"There are too many courses in literature and too few in grammar, syntax, and composition, etc. Most of the teachers in secondary schools know more about German literature—which they never will teach—than about the German language. The student must know first the language, before he enters into the study of the literature. Here lies the difficulty." I thoroughly and absolutely agree with the statement. Here lies the difficulty, at least a large part of it, and here must come the remedy.

Then again. Your replies to the *questionnaire* relative to the student teachers' ability fairly to speak the foreign tongue only confirmed my own observation and experience. Unless gained by a residence abroad or by the good fortune of being born into a German or French household where there was a grandfather or grandmother innocent of a knowledge of English, the future teachers are but indiffer-

ently equipped in this direction. "Only a few," "possibly 25 per cent.," "not many," "from 10 to 20 per cent.," are illustrations of the answers to the question. Sometimes, to be sure, more favorable estimates are given. In this connection, it should be said that the French departments seemed to make a better showing than the German. Query: What is the cause? Smaller classes? Fewer inherent difficulties? Greater insistence upon the accomplishment?

When we consider that a decently ready command of the spoken language is well-nigh indispensable if one would give life, vigor, and zest to instruction therein, the state of things just alluded to is disheartening. I know "that the teacher must be more than an animated phonograph," and that to insist upon a thorough speaking knowledge of a foreign language is chasing a will-o'-the-wisp. Nor is such "thorough knowledge" necessary. We cannot in fairness demand that every teacher in our secondary schools shall have a sufficient command of the foreign language to base his—rather, her—instruction entirely upon the practice of the *neuere Richtung*. But we may, if we will, insist upon their acquiring a sufficient knowledge of the spoken tongue, a sufficient ready command of simple speech, to enable them to make their teaching really vital and effective. We can devote more time and energy to putting this indispensable tool at their command, and thereby enhance the quality of the work they have to do. Particularly should we take greater pains with acquainting them with the *Realien* that are so important a staple in effective secondary school instruction.

In connection with the matter of *Realien* as fit language material, it is interesting to note an item in the *Lesekanon* actually obtaining in our schools. An inquiry as to the

texts used in first and second year teaching netted the following results: Of the 330 schools already referred to as replying to the *questionnaire*, 148 used *Immensee*; 103 *Glück Auf!*; 85 *Wilhelm Tell*; 70 *Im Vaterland*; 59 *Höher als die Kirche*; 38 *Gruber's Märchen und Erzählungen*; 33 *Germelshausen*. Other texts are less widely read.

Now, no doubt, the well-known tendency on the part of all of us to do what has been done is responsible for a good part of this showing. But the particular point to be noted is what seems to me the prenominal success of a book that has been available for less than a year. The schools certainly crave material such as is offered in *Im Vaterland*. Everything else being equal, books that deal with the home life, the habits and manners, the traditions and legends, the social and educational institutions, are sure to commend themselves to both teacher and pupils. They make it seem worth while to "dig"; they bring language study down from the clouds and appeal even to the unimaginative schoolboy.

But to return to the more immediate question before us—the practical and practicable means of raising the efficiency of language instruction. Teachers should understand that more definite results are to be striven for. It is our business to aid in the realization of these results. On this point one of our honored colleagues writes: "Standardize the work by outlining definite results to be attained which will prevent 'wild cat' methods; giving, *e. g.*, the amount and sort of work to be done each term, with sample examination papers." This, you will admit, is a valuable suggestion where it can be carried out, particularly so, if joined to his other demand: "Require of all candidates at least 30 hours of college German, with a grade I."

Another plank in a progressive educational platform, and one which is thoroughly sound, has been contributed by another one of my correspondents: "Closer inspection of high schools by expert representatives of leading universities (in our territory principally the state universities), not so much with a view of official grading and reporting as of personal advice and encouragement. I am not so much thinking," he goes on to say, "of the work of the regular 'high-school inspector' of the university, but of the special representatives of those departments that deal with important high school subjects."

We might do something toward raising the standard of efficiency by keeping in closer touch with our students after leaving college. Wherever friendly visiting is feasible, it certainly should be done. Where conditions do not warrant such direct contact, departments might resort to the issuance of occasional circulars, setting forth various aspects of specific problems. Teachers could then be kept informed of new and suitable texts or other aids to instruction; a certain fellowship and solidarity of professional interests could be established, an *esprit de corps* cultivated. It would be no slight gain to educational efficiency to have every teacher of French or German or English realize that the highest institution of the state system of education was directly, actively, sympathetically and helpfully interested in his or her success. It might even be advisable—though I am not sure of the feasibility of the suggestion I am about to make—for this Association to join forces with an equally representative body of secondary school interests for the purpose of issuing, say, a "Monthly High-School Visitor" for teachers of the modern languages, including English. *Modern Language Notes* do not, it seems to me, meet the needs of the average high school instructor, admirable

though that periodical is otherwise. The *Pädagogische Monatshefte*, again, exceedingly suggestive and helpful to those able to avail themselves of their contents, are likewise beyond the great mass of teachers in our public schools. Perhaps I underestimate their capacity and needs. I hope I do. No doubt some can and do derive much inspiration and help from these publications. But I very much doubt that very many secondary teachers can or do make them directly serviceable in their work.

Then again, school authorities should have it forced upon them very energetically that effective modern language teaching, including English, requires the very best teachers and that, *e. g.*, Latin *per se* is not entitled to any superior rank or position in the educational curriculum, nor Latin teachers *per se* to "deanships" in high school faculties. This fact is often overlooked, not only by the general public, but even by superintendents and principals. In most, though not all, of the higher institutions of learning in our territory, students bringing good modern language preparation are admitted to all the courses of the college. This Association should bestir itself to gain for the modern languages perfect and complete equality with the ancient tongues. "It is but just to praise the ancients," says von Trefort, the former Austrian Minister of Education, "but to praise them in order to depreciate the moderns is an emanation of ignorance or the fancy of pedagogues."

And, finally, we can increase the efficiency of language teaching, at least indirectly, by availing ourselves of the good that comes from closer organization. So far, we in the West have been greatly remiss in this particular. In our district and state teachers' associations meetings, the teachers of modern languages are, of course, greatly in the minority. There is little or no time to come together

in helpful professional intercourse. If the modern language teachers must meet during the regularly set state teachers' meetings—and I am inclined to think that is the only feasible plan—they might, at least, use the time thus appointed in considering and discussing their own specific work. To this end a closer organization should be effected in every state, an organization embracing language teachers of all ranks and schools. It should be the emphatic and distinct purpose of that organization—as it is that of the British Modern Language Association—"to raise the standard of efficiency in Modern Languages, to promote their study in the schools, and to obtain for them their proper place in the Educational Curricula of the country . . . . to help them feel that they are not isolated units, but a learned body, professionally trained."

Ladies and Gentlemen:—Your speaker trusts that the means and method of increasing the efficiency of modern language teaching suggested in this address are not mere visionary, impracticable schemes or dreams. He knows that radical changes cannot be brought about in a day or a year, but he knows, too, that a resolute effort on the part of educators will, in time, be rewarded with success. We can and we do give trend and direction to educational thought and practice. This Association, conscious of the great worth and value of the neo-humanistic culture and social aspiration expressing itself in the modern tongues—English, German, French,—is in duty bound to shape efficient instrumentalities for the spread of that culture. To prepare a body of eager, high-minded, enthusiastic young men and women for effective teaching in our secondary schools is one of our highest prerogatives. In no other way can we do as much for the commonwealth as by giving back to it strong, competent, professionally trained teachers; in no way better uphold and foster sound educational ideals.